

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An implantable orthopedic device comprising an elongated load-bearing element with at least one opening for receiving a fixation element, said opening having internal surfaces including a recessed outwardly facing surface around the opening and with an insert that may be inserted in a receptacle in the opening wherein the insert exhibits an external form that is generally at least partially complementary to the an internal surfaceform of the receptacle for engagement therewith and wherein the insert exhibits a central through-bore for mounting the body of the fixation element, and in which the implantable orthopedic device exhibits a means for holding the insert in the receptacle wherein the insert exhibits at least one locking mechanism with which conformingly locks with the load-bearing element.

2. (original) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the insert or the locking mechanism has at least one extension that goes along one side of the insert.

3. (original) The device as set forth in claim 2 wherein the extension is configured in a flexible manner in the standard direction or inclined to the principal plane of the load-bearing element along the axis and/or that the extension includes a groove running in the principal plane of the load-bearing element.

4. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the locking mechanism include at least one projection extending away from the central through-bore and intended for engagement with the load-bearing element.

5. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the locking mechanisms can be fixed against the load-bearing element by means of a fixation element in the opening and remain engaged with the load bearing element and cannot be released until the aforementioned fixation element has been removed from the opening.

6. (original) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the insert exhibits at least one locking mechanism which can interact with a complementary area in the area of the underside of the load-bearing element.

7. (original) The device as set forth in claim 6 wherein the load-bearing element exhibits at least one recess on the underside of the load-bearing element, in which the locking mechanisms can be engaged, so that the insert, does not extend beyond the aforementioned underside.

8. (original) The device as set forth in claim 6 wherein the locking mechanism can be engaged under the underside of the load-bearing element so that the insert extends beyond the aforementioned underside and acts as a spacer.

9. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the inner central through-bore of the insert exhibits an inclined axis that deviates from an axis the normal axis to the principal plane of the load-bearing element, in which the aforementioned inclined axis is inclined towards a narrow side of the load-bearing element and/or in the direction of the longitudinal axis of the load-bearing element.

10. (original) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the insert and opening are elongated in the longitudinal direction.

11. (currently amended) A bone stabilization device comprising:

an elongated bone plate having a plurality of apertures extending through the bone plate, said aperture having a recessed outwardly facing surface and sidewalls forming the aperture, said sidewalls extending from a bone contacting surface to the recessed outwardly facing surface at least one insert having a body with a threaded bore and an outer surface for engaging said sidewalls and said recessed~~an inner~~ surface of said aperture, at least part of said aperture is surrounded by a locking surface and said insert outer surface having a resilient extension for engaging said locking surface.

12. (original) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 11 wherein said aperture has a central axis extending from a top plate surface to a bottom plate surface and said bore in said insert has a central axis inclined with respect to said aperture central axis.

13. (original) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 11 wherein the aperture is in the form of an elongate slot.

14. (original) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 13 wherein said insert has an elongate outer surface for placement adjacent an elongate inner surface of said slot and said resilient extension extends between said adjacent surfaces.